

Interview #17

Location: Pt. Pleasant, New Jersey

Date: 2/2/06

INTERVIEW:

I: Back in the early 50's there was a guy named Bill Kleb come down from Greenport NY, and lookin' to put boats together for Snow Canning Co. So they come out with an old government hull, it was called the Huckleberry Finn, that they had rigged up for clammin'. It had a gasoline pump on deck, and a canvas hose, and they [] a dredge. And my father and a gentleman named Pete Erwinson from Wildwood Crest took that out lookin' for clams off Cape May, and that's where it started down there. After that they found the clams and after that there was a lot of little boats, 40 foot boats that were there: draggers that rigged up to go clamming.

RES: So what years are you talking about now?

I: This is...probably when it got started it was maybe '51, '52.

RES: So, there was no clammin' goin' on here before that?

I: No clammin' prior to that, no. Eventually, Mr. Erwinson bought his own boat, and old [] runner called a junior. He went in the bait clam business down in Cape May. So I had worked for him for about a year on that boat when I was in school, on days off and that. That had to be, yeah, that was in the early '50's too 'cause I went to Florida in '55...

RES: That's actually usually one of the questions we start with is how old you are, just to get that...

I: 65.

RES: 65. So you were born in '40?

I: 1940. Yeah, and then we...when I come back from Florida, that was in...I was only there for the winter, and when I come back from there, there was a lot of boats in Cape May at that time. The dock had a lot of Snow boats. That's when they come out with the fleet of shrimp boats from down south. 65 – 70 foot boats. They bought a bunch of...I guess it was 10 or 12 of them., and we come up here in Oct. I think, of '57.

RES: That's when you moved to Pt. Pleasant?

I: Yeah, we brought all the boats from Wildwood up to here, and at that time, the clam plant down there, Mr. Cohen owns now, there was boats from Sovereign Brothers up in Massachusetts, which I think they just got out of business not too long ago. They had boats here. I would say by the late...late '50's, early '60's there was 70 or 80 boats clamming.

RES: You're kidding! So, from 1950 there was nothing to late '50's...

I: Yeah, all the oyster boats from Delaware Bay rigged up. This dock here in Carltons dock, where that white building is...it was all clam boats. There was clam boats here, where this wharfside restaurant is. American clam boats used to unload there, right where that awning is, there used to be an unloading platform. The shrimp box, down by the Coast Guard station, that's where Barrymores dock was. The oyster boats unloaded there.

RES: Why did it grow so fast? I mean, was it that profitable?

I: It was...there was a lot of clams in them days. We didn't get a lot for 'em. I mean, you'd catch 300, 400 bushel a day and you wouldn't need small boats, but a 65, 70 foot...

RES: That'd whole clams or meats, you mean?

I: That'd whole clams.

RES: That's whole clams.

I: Bushels. And at that time I think we were getting' a dollar, a dollar and half a bushel. I mean...it was alive...

RES: Where was it goin'?

I: Most of it was goin' to Snow Canning Co. from here, down to Cape May, and then there they would open 'em and the meat was shipped from there to Pine Pt., Maine. That's where their plant was.

RES: That's where they tinned them or canned them?

I: Yeah. Yeah, they canned 'em up there. And then they moved the canning facility down to Cape May, down at the docks there. It was over at Cape May County Airport. They had...that's where they used to shuck 'em and they canned the [] clams. They're []. But then after that, they built a plant down by 2 mile Bridge in Cape May.

RES: Yeah? []

I: ...and I think they're still cannin' there. They closed the one...

RES: Yeah, Snows has got a...I think it's Snows, has got a plant down there.

I: Yeah. They closed the one at the airport. Back in them days, I mean you had XXX, over where the ferry dock is, and XXXXX. You had old XXXX.

RES: So were both from here landing all over at those different places, or [] come back here?

I: Yeah. Once the clams got thinned down here a little bit in the early '70's, and then the boats started leavin'. Some when to [Chincoteague], some when to Ocean City MD., and a lot of 'em are gone now. A lot of 'em old wooden boats are gone. And then they started...I guess that was probably around 1970 when they'd come out with the first 2 stern-rammers. [] in [] Harbor in Wildwood.

RES: How did they do it before?

I: With a side rake, just like this...reach up just like this.

RES: Side dredge?

I: Yeah. A side dredge, small dredge. And then they'd come out with the Norma Ann and the Bowery.

RES: This is the early '70's you're talkin' about? Like '71, '72?

I: Yeah, I would say early '70's. They were the ones...first ones that had the stern ramps on. And then there was a lot of boats that started riggin' up that way.

RES: Is that a much better way to do it?

I: Yeah.

RES: Why does it help you to do that?

I: Well, the gear comes up and down the stern and you don't have to handle it, like a man here has to handle it...trip the bag. Everything was pretty well automated there. And there was...it was a bigger boats, bigger dredges. I mean, this dredge is a 40 inch dredge. There's a dredge sittin' over here right on the other side of that blue boat, it comes off the Big Bob. I don't know what the measurement is. Here, they've had 'em up as high as 200 inch []. This is a 4 inch one.

RES: So, you're talkin' the depth of it?

I: The width of it. It's 5 times as big as that. We have a 2,000 gallon pump with on here with 5 inch hose. They're used in 6, 7, and 8 thousand gallon pumps with 8 and 10 inch hose, and they're catchin' a lot more. The only problem is, back in the early days, there was hand shuckin' and you couldn't have the clams broke. The clams that we sell for bait we can't sell 'em broken. The ones that are broken, you know, we discard them. We just gotta keep the whole clam. If you seen the stuff that comes in today that they use for food...I'd say...in the cages.....I'd say without exaggerating, 60 % of 'em are broken, and the companies like it that way, 'cause they pack tighter, and they're getting more meat out of 'em. They don't hand shuck 'em no more. They run through a machine, a flamer, they're opening 'em so the heels are up a lot higher. But you know, it's not a very sanitary product, I wouldn't think. If you look at it, it's...

RES: Maybe I don't want to look at it....eat clams....

I: I mean, people know you use it for bait, you know...I mean the stuff we gotta catch is different.

RES: How does it work, the technology, and how has it changed?

I: It hasn't changed. This is exactly the same as it was when my father first went....

RES: Can you just run me through how the technology functions?

I: Yeah. Back in the '50's, when you had a boat...the bigger of the boats was pretty much this size. This is a 50 foot boat. Back in that corner there you used to have a 6 cylinder Chrysler engine, with what they called a Hail Pump. It was maybe an 8, 9 hundred gallon a minute pump.

RES: Now, it was an independent engine that wasn't hooked to the main, right?

I: No, it's not hooked to the main. It was a fire pump, is what it was, and they had 3 inch canvas hose...about that big around in diameter...that used to go on to that, and would go down...hooked up to the dredge, same as it is here, only the early days, the dredges was just the bottom part here, and then it had a frame. This frame was there, and maybe one in the middle and one in the back. It was a 2 piece dredge. It wasn't all one piece. The old dredges used to be like 10 foot long in the front, and they they were broke, and then there was another 4 or 5 foot section behind them, and used to have chains. One on each side that connected them...that held them together. Now, today they use these one piece ones, and there's really not much of a difference, there nothin' more than a shovel. You know, you're washin' the bottom away, and it's just scoopin' up whatever's there.

RES: So the hose goes down...the hose is attached so that

I: Yeah. The hose goes overboard . Like when we drop the hose down, push the hose over, and then it goes down in a big circle. Then we throw the tow line over, which is hooked to here...

RES: Right. Yep. See that.

I: ...into that post. Then we throw the dredge over. Start the water pressure up, and you know, the water comes out the manifold here, and you drop it to the bottom. When it's on the bottom then you give it some more pressure, whatever pressure you wanna use. You know, some boats use 120, 130 pounds. We only use like 50 pounds, because if you use too much it blows the meat out of clams. We can't sell that.

RES: So that blows the muck and stuff out of the bottom, and

I: Yeah. This is goin' along this is washin' the sand, and the muck and that away from the clam. And then the knife comes along behind it and scoops 'em up.

RES: I see. Alright.

I: Then they go back in the back and every...we usually go 9, 10 minutes and we haul back. You know, blow the horn, the guy will haul back, adjacent up to the block there and they'll put the hook in it, goes in this strap here. And they lift it up and one guy opens the bag in the bag and dumps it, and they tie the bag back up, throw it overboard....

RES: That's the bag you're referring to back there?

I: Yeah. And we just do that for the day. You know, we just go back and forth.

RES: Alright. Interesting. And that technology has remained essentially unchanged other than what you talked about?

I: I got a book home from Snow Canning Co. They done a documentary, you may have seen it on TV, about underwater detectives. I can't even think of what it was. It was basically about the 3 or 4 boats that went down here a few years back, and none of the guys wanted to take 'em out, and they went out with us, and they done a documentary. It's been on the History Channel 3 or 4 times.

RES: You're kidding?

I: You know, they were out with us trying to you know, show how dangerous and how hard it was....

RES: Was it dangerous?

I: No. This isn't a dangerous industry. The people are dangerous. Just like people with guns, you know. If you want to go out in a 30 mile an hour breeze and try to go to work, well then, you're makin' your own danger. You know, if you use common sense, and fish in the nice weather and stay in, it's not dangerous, you know. That's basically what they were doin...I can't think of the name...what the heck the name of it was. It was about a boat, the Betsy Bob, and the Cape Fear, and another one. There was a half a dozen guys that got lost that one winter here.

RES: []

I: Yeah, and they done a documentary, and they went out with us. And I showed 'em this book that I had at home from Snow Canning Co. They couldn't use it because they didn't know who to get in touch with. They had to...

RES: Oh, for copyright?

I: Yeah. They had to go down through the Snow family [] Bordon sold Snows out and then you know, they couldn't get the rights with us. I had that at home and it shows the old dredge, it's just a frame [] you see is manila twine. They didn't have nylon in them days, and that used to go over the top of it, and the bag in the back on top was this manila twine.

RES: Interesting.

I: But the...it was pretty much the same. Same as today. Matter of fact, I mean if...if you wanted....you know, I just wonderin' how I could get it to you.

RES: Well, I'm gonna actually be back in town doin' these interviews over the next few weeks so maybe I'll give you a heads up next time I come in.

I: Or, are you dealin' with [] at all, down the extension office?

RES: I'm working with the Sea Grant people you mean, or the...

I: No. There's no Sea Grant in our office no more.

RES: No, no. Then I'm not. We're working with Sea Grant with [] Yeah, well, [] down at the facility at [] at Cape May...yeah, that's the Rutgers.

I: No, I was just wondering because, I mean, I could get it to you. My wife works at the Cooperative Extension here in the county. I'm the president of the county board of ag. You know, I could have got it to you there but...

RES: Well, I mean, I'll give you a shout next time I'm....

I: Yeah. Yeah. I'll get it to you. It'd be interesting, you could see the old boats. You know, these weren't the first ones that started out. The ones that first started out were small boats. Real weird lookin' ones, so you know if they (could have) held 300 bushel it was a big boat. But then the 60 and 70 foot boats that Snows come out with after that, you know, the Huckleberry Finn, the first one they had. They got rid of that, and they come out with these bigger boats, once they seen that there was clams here and it would be profitable for them.

RES: So you did a...focused entirely on surf clams through the '60's...?

I: No, I surf clammed then.

RES: ...into the 50's and 60's.

I: Yeah, and I codfished, long line codfish in the wintertime.

RES: You use the same vessel for that?

I: No. I was on a skiff with a man named XXXX. I think he's still alive down in Cape May. He's in his 80's, mid-80's now. I think he just retired last year.

RES: I actually spoke to XXXX, must be his boy or son.

I: No. He never got married. The XXXX is in Barnegat Light.

RES: Yeah. Not related?

I: No. Not related, no.

RES: Okay.

I: Uh, I done that. Then we scalloped...I've been draggin'...

RES: Were you livin' up here at that time? In Pt. Pleasant?

I: No. At that time I was in Cape May. You know...that was in the...I didn't come up here until '57. This was probably in the mid-50's or so.

RES: So they were still codfishing Cape May in the early 50's?

I: Oh yeah, yeah. There was a lot of boats. I mean we used to get 7, 8 thousand, 9 thousand pound a day.

RES: Longlining, or...?

I: [] yeah. Setline them, yep. In the wintertime. There was a big sea bass industry in the summer [] seabass. The boats that longline codfished in the winter usually had pods in the summertime..they'd go seabass fishing.

RES: What happened to those fisheries?

I: I guess the codfish packed up and run east as far as I can see because the last year they had 'em here was probably in the mid-60's. They had 'em 2, 3 miles off of Sea Girt and they were all small fish like that. They were catchin' the hell out of 'em, the party boats and that...you know, and after that, there was never nothin' left. They were gone. They're catchin' more now than they have the last 20 or 30 years.

RES: So, they've been gone for 40 years.

I: Oh yeah. Now whether it was just some weather change...I don't think there... anybody overfished 'em here. There was maybe 2 or 3 boats that fished out of here, setlining. There was never...draggers.

RES: What about the foreign boats? Were they ever in? The Russians, or the Spanish or..?

I: Russians...the Russians were in here. Was a lot of Russians. You know, I mean it was...you don't know what they caught, but it was always the governments, or not so much the government...the environmentalists said the Russians took 'em all.

RES: Well, you hear that a lot.

I: [] fishermen blame it on the Russians. You don't know what they caught. They had big boats, big horsepower. You know, whether they hurt the cod or not I don't know. You know, they tell you they wiped the striped bass out. Striped bass now are thicker than I've ever seen.

RES: You were talking in the parking lot before about the...the 60's was kind of the heyday, if you will, of the surf clam industry here, when things really...

I: ...yeah late '50's.

RES: And you were in it.

I: Yeah, late '50's to...all through the 60's. In '76 there...we had a kill come through here and it killed everything off.

RES: A kill. Like a red tide?

I: Yep. That's what they blamed it on. The lack of oxygen. I mean we went out here, like a mile off the beach and we're catchin' a bushel of lobsters a tow. What the hell's goin' on here? And fluke were up on top, and we were catchin' 20 bushel of clams where we used to catch 2 bushel of clams in a tow. You know, where'd all these come from? And then the next day we went out, went further down to Barnegat, and you know, same thing...20, 30 bushel of clams a tow but now we're startin' to see a lot of dead ones.

RES: So, you think they came up out of the mud or somethin'?

I: Yeah, they were comin' up out of the bottom. That's why we were catchin'.... the ones that we weren't down [] the bottom before. And the following day we went out, everything was dead. The meat was just runnin' out of the shell, and that was it. There was a few spots up east of the inlet, here. Manasquan and on up to Asbury Park where you could work, so ...

RES: What year was that, do you remember?

I: '76.

RES: '76.

I: Yeah.

RES: Just before the 200 mile limit?

I: Yep. So, at that time, it was all happenin' at about the same time. The 200 mile limit and that. Most of the boats left. There was only 3 of us left. There was the XXX...

RES: And there had been 70, 60, 70?

I: Yeah.

RES: Wow. That's a big change.

I: There was the XXX, which was XXXx's boat, my boat, the XXXX, and a boat called the XXXX...a fellow from...XXXX owned. That boat originally come up from Cape May in the 50's. A fellow in Cape May owned that [] Knot's Harbor. We changed over. We weren't catchin' enough clams in the shell, at 6, 7 dollars a bushel. They went up to 6 and 7 dollars then, after the kill. We weren't catchin' enough to make it feasible, so we got a license and changed the boats over and we started shuckin' on board the boat.

RES: Okay, so what was the difference there?

I: We were getting like \$30 a bushel.

RES: Okay, so you've gone from bait to food.

I: Yeah. Yeah, well we were food, but it was whole clams. [] all food clams. But we couldn't catch no more than 100 bushel a day cause it wasn't there. The resource wasn't there. 99% of our resources died. There was only a few spots up above where the red tide didn't hit. So, we fished there for 2 or 3 years shucking the clams and selling to eat, and we had a couple good years out of it but then...

RES: And you made that decision because it was worth more per pound.

I: Yeah. Yeah, well...

RES: You were payin' for your labor.

I: Yeah. We were payin' for the labor and we were stockin' a lot more money. We were getting 4 times as much for the clams, but then we started treadin' on feet, I guess, so that people that owned the companies and that they didn't want you to interfere with their markets. At first, we were sellin' the meat to them. I think personally what happened, we were takin' health inspectors out 2 – 3 times a year, and from the time we caught the clams until we had it shucked, packed, and below 45 degrees was less than a half an hour, and it was a bacteria free []. They were askin' for [] and couldn't do 'em.

RES: Oh, their boats, you mean?

I: With the clams. You know, where the stuff was bein' trucked and 2 days later it bein' shucked. You know, I don't think they could conform with that so....that was *my* view. I think that's why we got...we lost our markets. Nobody would buy 'em. So, I think we got forced out.

RES: Okay, and this was '78, '77, '78?

I: Yes. I would say '76 to '79 we did it, because '79 I bought a bigger boat. A scalloper.

RES: You decided to switch to scalloping in '79?

I: Well, one boat did. The XXXX was a [] rigged wooden dragger. I changed her over to fishin'. I went fishin' then. But I also bought, with a partner, bought a 95 foot scalloper. It was a steel shrimper and we rigged her up for scallopin'...that boat scallopin' until '85. Things were tight then, between the regulations, the boat had got caught twice with undersized scallops and fined. You know, if you weren't there...I wasn't on the boat. I had somebody run it, and you know, have them comin' in with small stuff. They didn't give a shit because you paid the fine. So, I sold the boat. I got rid of it. I stayed draggin' with the other boat until '92.

RES: '79 roughly, to '92 you were draggin'?

I: Well, yeah. '79 to '92 we went draggin'.

RES: For what? Mixed species?

I: Yeah. We started out for whiting at first. Whiting and ling. Fluke. Then after that they moved the sewage dump. New York and north Jersey used to dump the sewage in the mudhole, and that's where we fished. That's where the whiting was. When they moved that dump out to 100 miles off shore, them fish went out there too.

RES: You mean they were feedin' on whatever was...?

I: I think so 'cause the next winter we went 100 miles off shore. In the wintertime them old wooden boats, you know, this boat was built in '45 and you know, it was uncomfortable. It was just like the boats at the coop. Small wooden boats. You know, that's where you had to fish in the wintertime. So that took a lot of the interest out of it for me. Finally by '92, there was a relay program that started up in Sandy Hook Bay, Raritan Bay, and the rivers up there. There was a lot of good money bein' made.

RES: What is the relay program?

I: We were catchin' hard clams in polluted waters and takin' 'em down to Barnegat Bay and putting them back out and lettin' 'em cleanse themselves with a relay, and you know, leavin' 'em sit 60 days, and then you could take 'em up again and sell 'em. It was a good program. The state run it, you know. We had a lot of trouble getting funding at first.

RES: You did that in '92?

I: From '92 until 2002, I guess, we done that. You know, that was a good business. By yourself, no regulation except what you had to conform with, with the state. You know, fillin' out paperwork each day. An officer was there. But that was minimal. You could get up in the morning, go to work and it was a nice program. It was nice money. That's what I was doin' up until the time that he got hurt. It was [] 4 years ago last November.

RES: That's your son?

I: Yeah. That would have been in 2 thousand and....that was still 2001.

RES: Did he get hurt fishing?

I: Yeah. They were pullin' this dredge in and he had a hook and a rope in the back, and the weld broke and the hook pulled out of the dredge, hit him in the arm. Busted his arm. You know, he had 3 or 4 operations...he had a pacemaker in his arm and they had plates and then the plates broke, and then they had to take []. Then he had operations on his neck. They had to put steel collars on 3 vertebrae there. He's just startin', really now, to get back to work. You know, it's been over 4 years. But he's feelin' a little bit better now. He ain't got much with the one arm as far as strength. He's alive. Yeah, he didn't get hit in the head! If it'd hit him in the head...you know....

RES: It'd be game over.

I: Yeah. That's what happens...

RES: [].tryin' to pick up his...

I: Yeah. I come back...it was on a Sunday. We were out for a ride in the truck, me and my wife, and a neighbor had called and said my son was in the hospital. He said he got hurt on the boat. I went right up to Shark River...the boat was laying up there at the Coast Guard station, and I brought the boat down here. [] You know, I wasn't planning on it...I would have just preferred to be hard clamming and doin' what I wanted to do. I didn't really look hard getting back into this. But, this is no long trips and you know, it's daily.

RES: And this was part of the limited entry surf clam fishery?

I: No. No, this is an open fishery, you know, through the state. We're only allowed to work in polluted waters, along the beach where the bathing beaches are, where the people swim. That's pretty much the polluted waters in the state. Let me show you.

RES: Okay. [] you were out bait fishing. So you're the only one that can do this. That's not part of the limited entry program?

I: No. No, this isn't limited entry at all.

RES: But you're the only one that's in that sort of status?

I: No, there's quite a few other boats. There's 2 boats at Belford that do it. I don't think there's none south of here because there's really no clams left. See, in the dark shaded area is the only place we can work.

RES: And does it have to go to bait, or you could sell it for food?

I: No, no. It's all just gotta go to bait. See this is the federal closure here on up. Like all the way up to Sandy Hook we can go out to...mile and a half...and you see the fine print...3 mile I think. There. Here, Asbury Park, we can go out to a mile and a half. This is a mile. And then once we get on down to Spring Lake it goes into a half a mile...Bay Head's a quarter...this is a sewer pipe.

RES: Man, do you guys have to have a GPS thing on here?

I: Oh yeah, yeah. And see further down, once you get down to Barnegat, there's no closed waters.

RES: Do they monitor you?

I: Yeah. Yeah, oh yeah.

RES: The GPS thing on here?

I: Oh no, no. We have no monitors that way, no. No, we have the guys on the beach. I gotta ticket couple years ago for attempting to take a surf clam before its time. We're not allowed to work, in the wintertime, from September 1st, October 1st 'til May 30th we're allowed to work 6 in the morning 'til 6 at night. From May 30th until the end of September we're allowed a half an hour before sun up until 4:00. So, one day we left here...we were gonna go an hour up the beach and the weather was bad so we stopped a half an hour up the beach and we put the dredge over 15 minutes early. The cop was sittin' his truck and seen us, but the judge couldn't believe that. He said, "What the hell kind of law is this? Did you really try to take a surf clam?" I says, "Yep." He said, "I never heard of nothin' like that". It was \$300. Five grand next time. Spring Lake I had to go to court. The judge couldn't believe that. Says, I've never heard that. He couldn't believe it. You know, judge says, "what is the charge?", and the officer says, "attempting to take a surf clam", and he says, "*what?*"

RES: Sounds like a Saturday Night Live skit, doesn't it?

I: Yeah. But that was funny. But that's the only [] we get. We gotta tag 'em all. The tubs, these go to one place, Spring Lake freezer, and we gotta tag it, all the....the tubs are bagged. Each bag has a tag in it to let people know. But basically all our stuff....unless my son hauls it to Cape May, he sells it to people. He hauls and sells down that way in the summertime. Like from April until December, and then it slows down down there. But he takes care of basically all the bait shops there. 90% of what we catch goes to Spring Lake freezer, which is a bait wholesaler, and they process 'em into these...they'll package 'em. They'll open 'em up, put 'em into 8 oz. packages, freeze 'em. Some go into 1 lb. packages. They take most of our stuff. That's where most of our business is.

RES: Back when you started in the '60's and '70's, during when you were surf clamming. Where were your grounds then?

I: All over. Anywhere.

RES: How far out would you go?

I: I'd say up here...10 – 12 miles southeast of the inlet, down as far as Beachhaven. Up to Long Island. We used to go up to Long Island and fish, at times.

RES: But usually with 10 miles? 10, 12 miles?

I: Yeah. Within 10 miles of the beach, you know, from the beach out 10 miles.

RES: And you're looking for mucky bottom?

I: Yeah, sandy bottom. You know, on the edges on the lumps, it used to be pretty good around here on the lumps, the high spots in the sandier bottom....big white or brown clams. You'd get into the muckier bottom, you know, clay and that, and it's a blacker shelled clam. I guess that's from the environment it lives in. But, it was pretty good clammin'...

RES: You go everyday?

I: Everyday.

RES: How many hours was the trip?

I: When we first come up here we would commute from Wildwood up everyday. In '56 they just built...

RES: From Wildwood to here everyday?

I: Yeah. And they just built the Parkway. And the Parkway opened up so it was like an hour and a half ride. I mean wouldn't you....back in them days you rode the Parkway from Cape May to here or from here back to Cape May at noon time, you were lucky if you seen another car. Most of the time....

RES: Well, I was. I actually drove down this morning. I left at 6 this morning, it wasn't too bad. An hour and a half.

I: Yeah. I mean, there was nobody. We used to leave down there like 2, 3 in the mornin', and get up here by 4:00, and we'd go out at 4, and a lot of times we'd be back in, 10:00, 11:00.

RES: a.m.?

I: Yeah. And unload, and then we'd go back home. Sometimes we would stay, you know. A lot of times goin' back home there was a lot of stops. You know, sometimes we'd go down Route 9 and, you'd stop at one bar and have a couple, and stop at the next, somehow you never made it....you never made it home! Them days are all gone. I mean, you didn't hurt nobody.

There was nobody around. There was nobody on the Parkway. I mean you'd come up the Parkway, you had to take a leak, you'd stop right in the middle of the road and...

RES: Go.

I: That was it, you know.

RES: That's like Newfoundland still is. You can do that pretty much anywhere. Not too many bars, but...

I: There was nothin'.

RES: You were tellin' me a little bit in the parking lot that you thought that, or feel that regulations in part helped move you out of that fishery.

I: It moved me out of it. Moved me out of it.

RES: How? How did that []?

I: It just...it was just too much. You know, I mean you went so many years. It was my feeling that somebody is just getting into it, been in the fisheries for a year or two, and all these regulations come up. You know, it's easier for them to digest 'em than somebody that has fished for 25 or 30 years with no regulation. Doin' what you want. Fishin' when you wanted. You know, you're not goin' out in bad weather. Fishin' the weather you wanted to fish in. And then, all of a sudden, you're bein' told when to fish and where to fish and you gotta call in and tell people where you're at. Now you gotta have transponders on the boat. You gotta have observers out on the boat

RES: But then, when you got out it was late '70's, when you got out of the clammin', right? Is that what you're talkin' about or are you talkin' about goin' out...getting out of fishing in, you know, 2,000...

I: Getting out of pretty much everything. I mean...

RES: In '92 you moved into the relay clammin'.

I: Yeah. When I moved into the relay was...when I went there it was just a relief. You didn't have to put up with the crew anymore...waiting for them. You didn't have to go out and spend 30, 40 thousand dollars a year for personal injury insurance for liability for a crew. You know, I was by myself, I come when I wanted. If I wanted to take a day off I didn't have to worry about makin' a livin' for these guys. I wasn't hurting nobody but myself if I didn't work, you know. I liked that []. You can't fish in the ocean by yourself with a bigger boat. You're lookin' to getting in trouble. You know, you get wrapped up in the gear or somethin', then you're in trouble, you don't have somebody to help you. In the bay it's a different story.

RES: The late '70's was your first big move, it sounds like, out of the surf clam industry and into dragging.

I: Yeah. The late....'79.

RES: Did regulations affect you then? I mean, there weren't many regulations then, were there?

I: No...it was lack of...we couldn't sell the product.

RES: No product. It was an economics...

I: Yeah, it was an economic thing. We couldn't catch enough to sell in the shells here. If we wanted to go to Atlantic City or move you know, to Ocean City, MD or somethin' we could've stayed it longer. I didn't want to leave home. I didn't want to....

RES: Was your family now at this point in...was here.

I: Yeah. My family was growin' up, and it was here.

RES: So you weren't commuting anymore.

I: Yeah. I didn't want to commute. If we could've stayed shuckin' the clams, we would have probably still been doin' it. I wouldn't have went draggin'. But you know, when the stuff had all died off and you know, we had to go shuckin' the clams, that was a good business, but when we lost the market you couldn't [] around. Nobody had any money to sit on. You know, you didn't have a bank account to wait and see what happens, so we changed the boat over and went draggin'. And the draggin' was good until the fish left, you know, and went offshore....

RES: And that was mostly whiting at the beginning?

I: Yeah. That's what we basically rigged up to go whiting fishing. Summertime we want fluke. But that was the same thing. You went fishin' when *you* wanted to go fishin'. You know, but then the regulations come in there and I really....

RES: What's the first one you remember?

I: I really didn't keep track of the fisheries regulations because when I started to get out of it you know, I started clammin' there...I was clammin' part-time on weather...when it was bad weather I would go up above and clam, and when it was...

RES: Hard clammin'...

I:...yeah...I'd go fishin', and I was makin' more hard clammin' than I was fishin', so I was startin' to lose interest in that.

RES: In the draggin'?

I: Yeah. In the draggin' and you know, then the regulations started coming. You know, it was...the surf clam had started the worst of the regulations, with the limited entry. But then...

RES: But did that affect you at all? I mean, you weren't in that industry.

I: No, I was out of it at that time. But then we gillnetted. I had a gillnet boat here too, during the '70's and early '80's. And then gillnettin' went into limited entry. And it was funny, I didn't gillnet the year before that, and it was the same....I have a friend of mine who gillnetted for 40 years, but rather than him go get the gillnet license he was fishin', his wife used to go get it. So the license was always in her name, and there was no problem. But when they went to limited entry they wrote in whoever's name the license was in, they had to be on the boat. Well, she couldn't go on the boat 'cause she got deathly ill, and she couldn't transfer it to him, so he had to lose it.

RES: Did he take it to court?

I: No, he didn't...you know he went [] and they said, "Well, you can't do it. She's gotta go on the boat with you". I mean, that's just the way it is. It isn't...most of the people in the industry don't have the money to hire the lawyer to go and fight all this shit. You know, you're not knowin' where you're goin' and...I mean, there's industries I've got out of and you know, people behind me have done well.

RES: Like what? Scallops?

I: Yeah, scallopin'. You know, if I could've held on scallopin'...in '85 scallopin' was bad. You know, and when you got a million dollar boat...

RES: You tried that for about 6 years, right?

I: Yeah. And with the....you know, when we got into it, it was just the end of a cycle and the scallops went downhill, and the prices were bad and you know, you just couldn't make out. If we would've hung around....

RES: Yeah, but who knew then?

I: Yeah. You don't know. But that's what a lot of people do. They take gambles on things. I'm not that way. I'm not one to...I don't like borrowing money. I like to take care of myself, pay my own way. If I don't have money to buy it I do without it, you know. I don't like the pressure of a large mortgage on my head, you know. I just tried stayin' out of it all the time, and here I am. I 'm back clammin' again.

RES: Come full circle.

I: Yeah. It's full circle. Eventually, I'll be out of time so I won't have to worry about it.

RES: In all these switches from surf clam to dragging and the scalloping and everything, has your relative profitability stayed the same? We don't need numbers but have you made more money than you used to, or less, or did it go up and down?

I: Pretty much. I'm doin' as good now as ever. I'm probably makin' more now than ever. I've made a lot of money hard clammin', by myself. You know, prior to that it wasn't great. You made a living. I wouldn't say you're up in the middle class, you know, but you weren't down to poverty level. You could always go to work and you know, you didn't run out of money. If you run out of money, all you had to do was go to work, you know, and you usually made somethin'.

RES: And that condition has been more or less the same? It hasn't gotten harder or easier to make a living?

I: I would say it's harder for guys now because you know, there's a lot more price...

RES: A lot more price. What do you mean?

I: On fish. Fish are a lot more pricey now than they were.

RES: Wouldn't that help the fishermen?

I: Yeah, it helps the fishermen but the problem is the time that he can put in out to sea isn't there anymore.

RES: Because of regulations?

I: Yeah. Regulations. You know, you got a couple weeks where you can go flukin' and you got a month or two you can go get squid, you know and then, you can't fish in this area, you can't fish in that area. You know, it's tough on 'em. You know, you hear...you always hear the good trips. You know, you always... "hey, this guy made \$3,000 in one day". Yeah, but they ain't told about the 3 months prior to that he didn't make nothin'. Comes down and works on the boat everyday for nothin'. You know, there's a lot of that. So, you can always hear about the good times. You're always gonna have people that push hard, do better. They're either gonna do better....or they're gonna get hurt, or they're gonna drown, and that's what happens. That's where the dangerous part of the fishery comes in. If you want to go out and push hard in weather when it ain't fit, you're either gonna get lucky, and them guys come into the dock and say, "Oh, it wasn't that bad out there. We done good". Well, some of 'em do and some of 'em don't come back, you know. That's when you make it a dangerous job, you know.

RES: Back then in the '60's and '70's there was 60 or 70 boats back then. That's a lot of fishermen and fishing families and....

I: Oh yeah, sure. It was a lot. You know, the businesses around here at that time, they thrived. They had all these bars...Pee Wees was up here, the Shore Hotel....especially the bar rooms in this area. They're all out of business. Well, this one's gone, it's a vacant lot. The Shore Hotel's

gone. Neilies, that's changed hands, and it's more or less like a sports bar now that...as far as the fishermen drinkin' today like they used to ...they...

RES: ..don't do it.

I: They don't do it no more. No. It's a different crowd now.

RES: How many vessels would you say there are around that fish now...fish or clam or whatever...are in the seafood industry in Pt. Pleasant? Ballpark. 5? 10? 20? 30?

I: Oh no, no. There's 60, 70 boats I would say.

RES: Oh, so it's back up to where it was.

I: Oh yeah, yeah. When we were here back in the '50's, there was very few draggers here. There was a couple offshore draggers here, small wooden ones, there was 2 or 3 at the co-op. As a matter of fact they tied up down here, there was all clam boats that used to pack [out? 282] at the co-op. That's pretty much what got them started back in them days, but they were pretty down and out, there was just a handful of little boats, 3 or 4 little boats, one offshore dragger. The []. But, the clammers put a lot of money across that dock. You know, everybody was looking for a place to pack out their clams....

RES: This is the clam fleet...?

I: Yeah, when the clam fleet was here, you know. It put a lot of money around here. If you go back and look, you know, back in the late '50's you made \$15,000, \$18,000 a year. It don't sound like much but that was a lot of money. There was a boat here, The Maridore, used to go out scalloping, get 300 bags of scallops a trip, an 8 day trip, and come in and get...30 cents was the best price you used to get for 'em...and so he had 12,000 pounds at 30 cents. That's \$3,600 stock. He used to...the fuel used to be a nickel here...he would run up to Bayonne, up the refinery and get it there for 3 cents, his fuel.

RES: 3 cents a gallon.

I: Yeah, 3 cents a gallon...rather than pay the nickel. But I mean, you had 10 men. The boat was taking 30% of the \$3,600, so I mean, you had \$2,400 you had to pay grub and fuel, so if you had 10 men...

RES: That's on []

I: Yeah...for 8 days, they were makin' 150 to 200 bucks a man, and that was big money. That was a lot of money then, you know.

RES: Sure, in that day, I mean, that's not....

I: Yeah, I mean, yeah, today, I mean, people need more money....you couldn't live on it.

RES: No, no.

I: No...you couldn't live on it. So, I mean, that's how much it has changed.

RES: How many crew did the average surf clammer carry?

I: 3.

RES: 3?

I: Yeah. Yeah, most of the time it was always 3.

RES: Were all those vessels from here? Were they people that lived here, worked here, or did they come in from.....?

I: A lot of 'em on the boats from Delaware Bay, Port Norris boats, all the oyster boats that come up here, and I'd say there was 20, 25 of them that was basically black people on deck on them.

RES: Is that in addition to the boats that were from here, that 60 or 70, or is that part of it?

I: They were boats from all over...the 70 boats that were here were boats from all over. They were just packin'.

RES: Okay. How many would have been from here?

I: None.

RES: None?!

I: None. None that originated here. The first ones that were here were [] boats which come from Cape May. They were 70 foot shrimp boats, and there was 6 or 7 of them. And then the Snow boats come up, there was 16 Snow boats come up in '57. I'd say within a year or 2 then the American Clam Boats come up, and there was 10 or 12 of them. And then the oyster boats come, and I think there was 20 or 25 oyster boats.

RES: But they weren't from here?

I: No. No, they were from Port Norris. They were from...

RES: Cape May.

I:...Lewis, DE, Cape May, and you know, there was none that originated here.

RES: So, were any fishermen living here?

I: Yeah, there was, but they were just a handful of boats. There was maybe, I would say, 10 or 12 draggers, all told, and there was some driftnet boats, gillnet boats, and 2 or 3 longline cod setliners. And that was pretty much it. You know, there was no big run of boats.

RES: And now you say that there is again around 60 boats. Are they [] from here now or are they...?

I: Oh yeah, they originated from here and younger guys...there's a lot of boats that have rigged up for day scallopin'. There's a lot more...

RES: [] in town.

I: Yeah. There's a lot more lobster boats than I've ever seen. I don't even know half the guys, you know...all these boats. I mean there's 2 here, and down at [] there's 5 or 6 gillnet boats there...lobster boats. You know, guys are buying up permits and stuff like that. I mean, I've never gotten a penny for a permit. Mine, I've either given 'em up or they're taken away. I mean these guys talk money [] these permits. You know...

RES: Which ones were taken away from you?

I: The surf clams was taken away because I didn't land surf clams in any one year.

RES: What year was that? Do you remember?

I: No, not right off hand. It had to be, we went draggin'...it would be in the....

RES: '80's.

I: It had to be...when we went draggin'. That had to be in the...

RES: In the 80's then.

I: Yeah, the early '80's, and I didn't know it...when my license come in the following year...the license from the federal government, it used to have quahogs, surf clams were on the top, and it had the multi-species and scallops and everything under it. And that was missing. I got in touch with them and I says, "You know, what happened here?".

RES: What's goin' on? Right.

I: They said, "Well, you gotta come up with landing receipts for the last 12 months. You didn't clam". We had no...used to have to fill out a daily report then, and we had no reports... So I said, "Well, I was fishin'".

RES: Didn't matter?

I: Didn't matter. There was some boats...XXXX and XXXX, had some old boats in Cape May that had permits on them. They took 'em to court and they did get theirs back.

RES: Why didn't you do that?

I: I didn't have the money to do it, and I....

RES: It was expensive?

I: Yeah. It was costly and I really didn't...you know you didn't know if you were gonna win individually by yourself, I mean rather than them guys had a lot of money. You know, they were big in the clamming industry. I didn't feel that I was losing anything. I didn't think it was gonna come to what it is today with the transferrable quota stuff. You know, in them days it wasn't. You know, that was just about the time that that started, right after that. I don't know the exact year, where this quota was given to these guys. Some of the guys worked hard to deserve it. Some of the guys got a lot of....

RES: Got lucky.

I:....*did* deserve it.

RES: Would you have done it differently, knowing what you know now?

I: I have no regrets about it really.

RES: You like the relay.

I: I'm happy. I've went through 50 years of my life that I've been runnin' boats, so it's not working for somebody else. Always workin' for myself. Now's the only time gotta work for goddamn family. I thought it was gonna be the other way around! I have no regrets. It was a good life.

RES: Good. A couple background questions that we usually ask at the beginning that I didn't get to, but we ask about your kid. You mentioned you had the one boy.

I: Yeah, I have a girl too.

RES: And you're married?

I: Yes.

RES: How much education were you able to get?

I: High school.

RES: I think you told me but I didn't jot it down. Where were you born?

I: In Willowgrove, Pennsylvania.

RES: But your family was living down in Wildwood?

I: Wildwood. I moved to Wildwood, my family moved to Wildwood when I was 1 year old.

RES: So, you essentially grew up there.

I: Yeah.

RES: What do you see for the industry in another 10 years?

I: I have no idea. I mean the way they're...you know there's certain species have recovered to thicker than they were 50 years ago, that I know of, but you know, they're still cuttin' 'em back, and cuttin' 'em back, like fluke.

RES: You think there's more fluke than there was 50 years ago?

I: Oh yeah, sure there is. You know, and striped bass, but you're not allowed to catch 'em. You know, there's just too much regulation, and there's too many people, environmentalists and conservationists and different groups that you know, are against you. Then you have the animal rights people don't want you hurtin' 'em. You know, it's tough.

RES: Fish feel pain, huh?

I: It's *tough*, you know. I've been [] since 1976 I've been involved with NJ Farm Bureau, for I guess 20 years, there up until 3 years ago, I was XXXX for NJ Farm Bureau. I mean, they deal with fisheries issues, but 90% of their concern is farming. They've the same problems. The only thing got...when you buy a boat it deteriorates and depreciates. Farmland goes the other way. So, this is the only thing those guys...

RES: That's a big difference though.

I: Yeah. They've got land, but you know, the problem is you know, they've got 1,000 acres of land and the mother and father died, they pass away and they leave it to the kid.

RES: That poor kid.

I: Now, he's gotta come up with hundreds of thousands of dollars in inheritance taxes to keep his own land, you know. Now they got a million dollars they can write-off, to begin with, but I mean you take land now, you take 1,000 acres of land

RES: It's worth a pretty penny.

I: Yeah. Where are you gonna get all the tax money to pay the tax on it? You gotta sell part of the land off. Then you get a bad year, you sell another piece, and you know....them boys got it

tough. I mean, you gotta go out...somebody with 400 acres...you gotta spend \$100,000 a year to buy insecticides and pesticides and fertilizer and seed, and then have a bad crop. I mean, last year, friends of mine in Berlin, he had...John had 800 acres, and year before green peppers were good so he planted green peppers, and he had 100 acres of green peppers and they were \$4 a box. It cost \$2.40 just for the box. Then you gotta pay somebody to pick 'em. Then you got your time and your labor and the seed and all that in...

RES: You're not even breakin' even.

I: Plow 'em under, you know. Corn, grain corn, and soybean is cheaper now than it was 50 years ago. So, you can't compete. The only thing that people got is their land, you know. Hopefully, they can...I just had a friend, XXXX, he had a big farm, a dairy farm. Been in his family from his father to him. XXXX is goin' on 75 years old. I guess his son's been runnin' the dairy farm in Florence for the last 10 years, and they just sold it. Not worth it. Dairy farmers really got it bad in Jersey, you know. You can't....

RES: Competing with Wisconsin, and ...

I: You can't do it. You just can't do it. I mean there's guys that they sell \$1,000,000 worth of milk a week...er...a month, in the state of New Jersey, with 300 head of cattle, and that's a lot of milk. But they say it costs 'em \$998,000 to produce that.

RES: Oh my god. That's amazing. That much overhead.

I: People go in the store and they see your price of tomatoes... you know, like now... they're like 4 bucks. You know, when Green packed 4 or 5 years ago down in Cedarville, in Salem County, Green Pack Tomato Co., you probably seen it on the shelves....well, they're originally from California. They were paying farmers here 5 cents a pound for field tomatoes, gross weight, open in the truck...and they come in...and they filled their warehouse....and they had too much inventory, and they said they were shuttin' down, and they were gonna go out of business. They said if they did open back up that they wouldn't use Jersey tomatoes because they could get tomatoes from California delivered here for 3 []. The farmers in Jersey, they're growin' gross highly produced tomatoes, now are selling in Pennsylvania...they gotta deliver 'em there though....and they're getting 6 cents for 'em. So, you go in the store and see \$3.00 - \$4.00 a pound...

RES: That's not what the farmer's getting.

I: Yeah.

RES: You think the fishing industry's better off than that?

I: Better off now? I think eventually it will be restocked. You know, there seems to be a lot of people in it that have a bright outlook on it. I don't, 'cause I'm not gonna be here to begin with but you know, I liked it better the way it was. Maybe I just ain't goin' along with progress.

RES: What did you like better, just that you had more freedom...?

I: Yeah, we had more freedom. You had more...

RES: You didn't have the government breathing down your neck?

I: Yeah. I mean, you go out there now and I mean, back in them days, when you caught something you brought it in. Now you go out there and you're in a directed fishery, and you're allowed to catch squid and [] you catch 5,000 pounds of porgys. What do you do with them? Throw 'em back overboard. You catch codfish, throw 'em overboard. You can't even take 'em home to eat. I mean there's been guys down here...there was one guy there, he got out of it. Used to be partners with XXX on the XXXX, and he come in one day and he cleaned out. 2 ling. He fileted the ling, he was taking the filets home for dinner and he got off the boat to go home, and the officer got him. Wrote him up for that. He said. "That's it". Next day he sold his house and moved to Maine.

RES: You're kidding?

I: No. He said that was it. Got a cabin in the woods somewhere!

RES: That's too bad that that happens....

I: Oh sure, sure, that happens you know, and it's just....

RES: That's what gives the relationship a bad flavor to a lot of people, stories like that, I think.

I: I mean everybody says that recreational people blame it on the commercial guys. Now they're more or less fillin' in with...you know siding with the commercial guys against the government but there's government regulation....years ago I kinda thought it was bad because they had scientists sitting in Arizona, never even seen the ocean, telling you how many whiting there was in the Atlantic Ocean, and stuff like that. That never quite made sense to me, you know, how did they come up with this? You know, how did they ever prove it out? You know, where they get their statistics I have no idea.

RES: You think science is bad in general?

I: Some of it is because you don't have a control. You know, I mean, I've worked on projects up in the Raritan Bay with Sea Grant with XXXX with National Marine Fisheries up there on clams, where I mean, we buoyed off an area and we got guys to work it right down to nothing. Even go down to them little damn things that make the spaghetti mud, them little pink things, and he said, "Well, you know everything turned out good but you killed too many of them". Well, we had to go back out and find out where the hell they were goin' and what they were...they were in the mud...when we washed the rake out, that one inch spacing between bars, they were washing out. So, that's why he didn't see 'em there, and I mean, there you have the controls, but you go out in the middle of the ocean, I mean you're just guessing. They had boats

2 – 3 years ago...I don't know what the hell the....I want to say the Dolphin, the one survey boat, off Sandy Hook, whatever.....

[]

I: ...I mean he...they would make a tow and they have 50 pound of fluke, and the Cape May boat hauled back, had 1,200 pounds, right along side of them.

RES: 'Cause they didn't know what to do.

I: They didn't know what they were doin'. Their gear. So then they got...a couple years ago they got a bunch of guys together in one [] on the boat, and they made recommendations for the gear and that. Then they got the nets, fish and []. But the government didn't want to change nothing because they said it would ruin all their records from the past.

RES: They stirred it up, they gotta keep stirring it up.

I: Yeah. And they didn't want to admit they were wrong, you know. You know I had that problem back in the late '70's when we were fishing in Asbury Park. They done a survey, and I think at that time the boat was called The Dolphin. There was a meeting in Red Bank and there was a young biologist there, and he was telling us about all the surf clams were dead, he says, "You [] to Manasquan Inlet anywheres east of Manasquan Inlet there is no surf clams whatsoever". I put my hand up, and he says, "What do you want?", and I said, "Well, I beg to differ with you there. For the last year, year and a half we've been workin' east of Manasquan Inlet on up to Asbury Park, surf clamming, because that's the only thing left". He says, "Well, you must not be doin' very good, I'll tell you that, 'cause there's no clams there". I said, "I'm tryin' to tell you there are clams there. That's where we work". "Don't tell me", he says, "we just done a survey. There's nothin' there." I mean, this guy got belligerent, you know. That's where we work! We worked there for 3, 4 years, and he's tellin' me there's nothin' there! I mean, and there that way today, a lot of them. They don't want to take any input from the fishermen, whether it's....

RES: Why not?

I: I have no idea. They just....

RES: [You say ? 18] they don't trust them or they don't....

I: That's the feeling I've got, and that's the feeling....you know if you read the paper around here with the John Geysers column with the recreational guide, that's the feeling they're getting now, you know. They don't...they just don't want to listen. You know, the science is bad. A lot of it is, and they don't seem to want to correct it. When they tell you there's no fluke in an area and there's a boat there that's catchin' 50,000 pound of 'em a day, well, somebody's gotta be wrong somewhere, you know. Maybe with the observers on the boat. Maybe now, a lot of these boats carryin' observers, they'll be able to see. You know, they'll get the observers view of it. Maybe they'll say, "Well, you're full of shit too". I don't know. You know, somethings gotta change.

I mean, it's natural for a guy to want to make money, and as competitive as it is...you know, to compete with the other guy, but none of the fishermen are in business to put themselves out of business. You know, it's just like a farmer. A farmer isn't gonna ruin the land. He's a good steward of the land, because that's where his living is. He's gonna take care of that, you know. If he's gonna ruin the land, then he's outta business, and it's the same with the fishermen. You overfish 'em,...

RES: They're gone.

I...you're gone. Years ago, if things got bad in one fishery, I mean, if it slowed down, you went and done somethin' else. You went yellowtailin, you went fluking, or winter flounder, or cod fishin'. You could change. Today you can't change. You're in a directed fishery, and that's where you stay.

RES: Do you think that's better or worse for the fishery?

I: I'd say it's worse for the fishery because years ago, when you got down to where you were...say you were getting 2,000 pound of codfish at 10 cents a pound. Well, I ain't makin' out on that. I'm gonna go whiting fishing. Well, if you weren't allowed to go whiting fishing, you had to stay on that codfish, well...

RES: You're gonna keep hammering it.

I: You're gonna keep hammering and hammering, just to try to hang on, and the codfish is gonna take a beating and you're gonna go out of business anyway. You know, eventually you're gonna go under. And that's what I think of a directed fishery. Farming's the same thing. You grow tomatoes year after year and you have a bad year, you grow something else. If they tell you, "Well, you have to grow tomatoes, and that's it. You're a tomato farmer". What's gonna happen, you know. You gotta be able to change.

RES: You feel like [you've? 43] gotten less flexible, as an industry.

I: Yep. You gotta have flexibility. You gotta change.

RES: Those are the questions that we have on the survey. Usually we end up by asking if there's anything else that I didn't ask about, or that we didn't talk about, or...that you think we should be taking into account. You know, writing down, or a particular regulation or a particular condition that you see out there that's bad news or whatever.

I: Right now they holler about by-catch. You know, that's a big concern...about...you know, the by-catch. Why don't they let the people bring the by-catch in and sell it?

RES: What do you mean, they holler ... in what fisheries...?

I: Well, they're hollerin' now in the old fisheries, that the conservation....one of the conservationist groups...

RES: [] Foundation?

I: I don't know. I can't think of it.

RES:...New England...

I: Yeah. But I mean they're hollerin' about all the by-catch you're killing. You know, in a directed species, you know, you're there for fluke, so you catch 1,000 pounds of fluke, and you're killing 20,000 pounds of other stuff, which you're throwin' overboard. There is by-catch. There is a by-catch problem. But rather than throw it back overboard dead, why don't they let you bring it the hell in?! You know, it's a different story if you have a porgy net, a high-rise net on, and you go out and come in with 10,000 pound of porgys. Well, that was a directed fishery. But if you went out with a fluke net and you're flukin', and you catch 50 boxes or 100 boxes of porgy by accident, which happens sometimes, why do you have to throw 'em back overboard? Why can't you bring 'em the hell in? You know, that's not what you were there for, to get them. I mean the stuff is valuable. It's worth money. Everything's worth money today in fisheries. So why throw it back overboard dead?

RES: Well, I mean...I think some people might argue that people would cheat. That they'd go out....

I: Well, that's their whole thing. They told us with codfish, up east, when they closed down Grand []. Georges Bank, and that. They said at that time that if a fisherman went out and had a 5,000 pound tow of codfish and he wasn't allowed to bring 'em back overboard, that would deter him from goin' back in that spot again. Well, that's pretty...I don't think that's right, you know. I mean, that's crazy. You just killed 5...it's just gonna piss him off that he couldn't bring 'em in after killing them fish, you know. The mesh sizes have helped a lot. A lot of fish get away now. The by-catch is down. Years ago, there was a lot of by-catch, but you couldn't sell 'em. They weren't worth nothing. Stuff went back overboard. You're with bigger mesh today. Evidently, I haven't been involved with the regulations on mesh sizes so I don't know what they're losin', but they're losin' a lot. A lot of stuff is escaping out of their nets. Why can't they just regulate it with somethin' reasonable with a mesh size and whatever come up in that net, you can bring it in and sell it?

RES: So you're in favor, in some ways, of gear regulation?

I: I think all fishermen would prefer the gear regulation...I mean... because, if they are still catchin' by-catch, it's gonna be a problem. You know, there's gonna be people...even with observers on the boat...observers are gonna start reporting it, if it's there. I'm not sayin' it's there. But if there is an amount of by-catch, if you get into some kind of fish and you catch a good dose of 'em, it's gonna get reported, and that's gonna be a problem with people hollerin', you know, "You're killing this and that just to get a little bit of this". If it comes up in the net, why not bring it in? Regulate it with gear. I mean, there's different nets for different species. You know, there's a whiting and squid net, and that's even regulated now. I don't think they can go under 3 inch. But then, fluke net's up to 6 inch now. And high rise nets that they use for

porgy and that are giant mesh. You know, you're not gonna catch...nobody is going to leave the dock with \$2 a gallon fuel and go out with a fluke net to try to catch porgy. But if you should happen to get in 'em when you're flukin', at least be able to bring 'em in. You know, or if you take a high rise net and you should happen to catch 100 pound or 200 pound of fluke, when you're porgy fishing, why do you have to throw them over? I mean, you *do* catch a few, but you don't catch that many 'cause they got a mesh that big. They can go...some of them meshes are 6 foot. I mean, a fluke could swim right through it. You know, it does happen. I'm *sure* it happens.

RES: What about the council and the commission? Do you think they do a good job?

I: I think they try to do a good job, and I think it's hard for them. You know, if you speak to XXXX down there on The Viking, the other dock, he's been on mid-atlantic council, and the state marine fisheries council. He would have a better view on that. I've never been involved with 'em, you know. That's the part that come to me when regulations got....I've been involved with...you know...fisheries goin' right back into the late '50's, you know, when I represented the guys here. Early '60's, I guess that was. We had went on strike and got involved with the National Maritime Union. You know, that fell through. Fishermen don't stick together. They're too competitive. They're not gonna stick together unless they're really in a crisis. I mean, I'm friends with...I've known the guys down the other dock for 40 years or better here. Jesus, it's goin' on 50 years.

RES: You mean at the co-op?

I: At the co-op, or the guys that []. Most of 'em are dead now, you know, most of the guys that I grew up with around here. You know, I've been involved with Farm Bureau and with the county boards and you know, different organizations....New Jersey Commercial Fishing Association. I'm on the board of directors of the Garden State Seafood now...you know... with XXXX, from Cape May...XXXX.

RES: Yeah, I know XXXX [].

I: Yeah. So I mean, I've been involved with them, but most of the guys, you know, it's tough to get 'em involved. Really tough.

RES: Because they don't give a shit or because they just don't want to work together?

I: They just don't care. At times you get the attitude that somebody else will take care of it. Like XXXX, I mean he's done a great job on the mid-Atlantic council. Sure, he gets paid for that, but he could have been fishin' and makin' more money, you know. And he just bought another boat. He just bought XXXX last week. His boat got burned up a few years ago. He was ready to get out of it, but he's a fisherman. What else you gonna do, you know? He's not a computer expert, or you know, that's his business. That's what he's done all his life. That's what he's gonna keep on doin'.

RES: Well, I hope I get a chance to talk to him. He's on the list of people that I want to try and talk to.

I: Yeah, he's down there on the boat. He's tryin' to get some work done...he's got an insurance inspector comin'. I'm sure he'll talk to you.

RES: Yeah, well, I'm actually...I gotta head back tonight, but over the next couple weeks. As I say, we're gonna be doing them.

I: Yeah. I think he said next week, 'cause I asked him today if he was goin' to the ad convention 'cause he usually sits on Garden State Seafoods seat. I gotta sit with the county, and he said if he could go fishin' he was gonna go fishin' but he didn't know if he's gonna be able to go or not.

RES: Yeah. Weather's not too bad today. It's been crappy down here. At least down Cape May it was. It was pretty blowy...

I: See here it's pretty good for us because we can go 7 days a week and you know, we can't work at night, so I never work at nights anyway. I didn't like that. I mean, offshore we did when we were fishing in the wintertime offshore, scallopin', but you know, clammin' I never have. You know, this is nice. I got reports to fill in and send in every week. You know, fill out tags each day, but that's it. It don't bother us. The state isn't as stringent as the feds. You know, with the relay program it was tough because it was a polluted product and they don't want 'em on the market. You know, anybody eating 'em. That's why these tags are there. It was a little stricter with the hard clams. They used to follow us up and down the road and make sure we got 'em on the right lots and stuff like that, but once you got conforming to it it was fine.

RES: A lot of 'em are health concerns, more than anything else.

I: Yeah. Yeah.

RES: It's important.

I: Yeah. That's where the problem was, was health concerns. The only thing...concern I got with here is puttin' the tags on 'em and stayin' within the time frame, you know. Not bein' too early.

RES: Yeah. You gotta watch those 15 minutes, right? So, anything else you want to add, or to let you get back to your day?

I: No. That should do it.